

Mission Statement: MEA will strengthen Mennonite education for restorative leadership, work, and service throughout the church and the world.

A season of change and opportunity



MEA has moved into a new season of organizational life with several personnel changes. On September 1, 2021, [Rev. Dr. Michael Danner](#) (top) began as Executive Director and CEO of MEA. Michael serves as part of a shared staffing arrangement between MEA and Mennonite Church USA Executive Board. In this shared staffing role, Michael provides leadership to MEA as the Executive Director and to the church vitality team of MC USA as the Associate Executive Director. The goal of the shared staffing arrangement is to reimagine the education ministry of the church to better serve the needs of MC USA members, congregations, and conferences.



[Janice Eigsti Miller](#) (middle) was named CFO and Senior Director of Operations as of January 1, 2022. A Goshen College graduate, she replaced Lisa Heinz, who retired in December after 23 years of service. Janice brings experience in the finance departments of Bethany Christian Schools and Goshen College.



At its March meeting, the MEA Board of Directors elected [Dr. Nathan Alleman](#) (bottom) as Board Chair to replace outgoing Chair Dick Thomas. Dick has served faithfully as Chair since 2018, and we are deeply grateful for his wealth of experience and wisdom. Nathan will begin his tenure July 1. He is also a product of Anabaptist-Christian education, having attended Eastern Mennonite School in his youth and Messiah College for undergraduate studies. He holds a Master's Degree in Higher Education and a Doctoral Degree in Educational Policy, Planning and Leadership. He is an Associate Professor of Higher Education at Baylor University, Waco, Texas, and has served on the MEA board since 2019. With new staff in leadership roles and a new Board Chair, we are excited about MEA's future!

The goal of MEA going forward is to build on what continues to be vital from the past, while considering the educational needs of the whole church, including local congregations and area conferences, non-degree educational programming, and resources for church-based leadership development.

MEA's Hispanic Ministries Education programs: SeBAH & IBA

MEA operates two programs aimed at cultivating Spanish-speaking leaders and disciples of Jesus: a seminary and a Bible institute. *Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano* (SeBAH – the Hispanic Anabaptist Biblical Seminary) and *Instituto Bíblico Anabautista* (IBA – the Hispanic Anabaptist Bible Institute) offer strong theological and Biblical teaching from a uniquely Hispanic and Latino/a Anabaptist perspective. Reducing the barriers of access and affordability is a priority for this ministry.



- [IBA student Josué González](#), (left) of Miami has been named moderator-elect of Iglesia Menonita Hispana, the Hispanic/Latino/a constituency group of MC USA. An airplane dispatcher by trade, Josué is set to graduate from IBA this Spring. One of the best affirmations of our work is when our students emerge as leaders in the church. We are very proud of Josué!

- [Marco Güete \(below left\) will walk part of El Camino de Santiago](#) in Spain to raise funds for IBA and student scholarships. He will walk from Burgos to Foncebadón, a 253-kilometer (157 miles) endeavor that will take more than 15 days, beginning May 26. His goal is to raise \$40,000. Join us in praying for Marco's journey. You can contribute to this project at www.Paypal.me/MennoniteEd or www.MennoniteEducation.org/donate.



- **More than thirty IBA students will graduate this Spring** from three study centers in the Bronx and Brooklyn, NY, and from one study center in Miami, FL. **The SeBAH graduation ceremony** will be held at Hesston College on Labor Day weekend. An IBA Tutor Training will occur at Hesston in conjunction with graduation.

Join us in celebrating the graduation of these students! We give thanks for their dedication and hard work, and we honor their accomplishments. May they continue to grow in discipleship, and may their ministries bless the church. To learn more about IBA or SeBAH, or for enrollment information, visit <https://hispanicmennoedu.org/>.

MEA's Investment Fund

[The MEA Investment Fund](#) serves over twenty MC USA-affiliated schools, congregations, area conferences, and other programs with Mennonite education-related assets that are integrated into an investment pool. Pooling funds offers many benefits to the participants. **MEA has contracted with Everence Financial to provide administrative support to the Investment Fund Committee**, a role previously held by the MEA CFO. Everence brings particular expertise and resources, which will contribute to the continued success of the fund. Taylor Caouette, a Goshen College graduate, has been appointed by Everence as the MEA Investment Fund Facilitator. As of April 30, 2022, the Total Fund was valued at **\$195.3 million**.

MEA Financial Summary

- **Operations:** MEA is grateful to have operated at a surplus for the first three quarters of the fiscal year (July 2021 - March 2022). Contributing factors include gifts from individual donors being higher than budgeted and grant money received for some special projects for Hispanic Ministries. Additionally, expenses for travel and in-person meetings remain much lower than pre-pandemic levels.
- **Racial/Ethnic Leadership Education (RELE):** This program is being restructured to meet changing ministry priorities. In the meantime, MEA continues to receive RELE funds, which totaled \$29,483 through March 31, 2022. \$18,290 were from churches/conferences and \$11,192 from individuals.

Other ways MEA is supporting Anabaptist-Christian discipleship in education

- The [2021-2022 Enrollment Report](#) is an annual compilation of enrollment data from all member educational institutions and programs from early childhood through continuing education. Based on headcount in the fall 2021:
 - Mennonite educational institutions are touching the lives of **9,101 students**: a decrease of 249 (2.7%) students from the 2020 total of 9,350.
 - In higher education, the total headcount decreased by 108 students (with decreases of 13 in adult degree-completion, 108 in graduate, 13 in seminary, and increases of 26 in undergraduate).
 - Preschool, elementary, and secondary education levels showed a decrease of 127 students (2.5%).
- **Electronically:** MEA works through social media and other digital promotions to amplify the work of the schools and to emphasize Anabaptist values. We encourage you to "follow" MEA and the affiliated schools!
- **Prayer:** The [MEA prayer newsletter](#) is a monthly prayer resource that continues to be a blessing to the schools and local congregations. These prayer requests come directly from the schools across all levels of Mennonite education to help congregations and individuals know how best to pray for the schools and the work being done towards faith formation.

The prayer requests can be shared in bulletins each week and/or printed or emailed to congregants each month for home use.

- **Human resources:** MEA publishes a weekly [Job Board](#) and distributes it to congregations, schools, constituents, and donors across the denomination and beyond. Schools affiliated with MEA can list their job openings at no charge. There are a significant number of vacancies at all levels across Mennonite education, including several principal/head of school positions. **MEA is providing support to several search committees.**
- **Scholarships for Students of Color:** For many years, MEA has helped administer contributions for the Racial Ethnic Leadership Education program and the Lark Scholarship, which were designed to help students of color attend a higher education institution of their choice. Recently, the MEA Board of Directors discerned that the RELE program and the Lark scholarship should be refined into a new scholarship that would assist Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students, who are members of MC USA congregations, to attend a higher education institution affiliated with MC USA: Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, (Elkhart, IN), Bethel College (North Newton, KS), Bluffton (OH) University, Eastern Mennonite University and Seminary (Harrisonburg, VA), Goshen (IN) College, and Hesston (KS) College. Currently, MEA is in a process of discernment to reimagine the goals and parameters of this new BIPOC scholarship. We plan to have the new scholarship in place for the 2023 – 24 academic year.

The MEA board and staff thank you for the many ways you support Mennonite education across the church!

Submitted by Michael Danner
Executive Director, CEO
May 2022

MD/jvg